



MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
September 8, 2015

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL
Mr. Wayne McCall, District II, Council Chairman
Mr. Paul Cain, District III, Vice Chairman
Ms. Edda Cammick, District I, Chairman Pro Tem
Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV
Mr. Reg Dexter, District V

Oconee County Council met at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, County Administrator Scott Moulder, County Attorney Thomas Martin and Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council present.

Press: Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeese.com/council]. In addition it was made available [*upon request*] to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Members of the press present: Ray Chandler/Anderson Independent & Steven Bradley/The Daily Journal.

Call to Order

Mr. McCall called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and opened the floor for public comment.

Public Comment Regarding Noise Regulations in Oconee County

Mr. Greg Oraham, Pastor Foothills Church, addressed Council requesting ordinance changes that include objective measurements, consider other local jurisdiction existing ordinances, and consider including houses of worship as an exception to any established standards.

Mr. Gary Littlefield addressed Council requesting Council establish objective measurements and to establish that measurements will be taken from the closest boundary line when a complaint is filed. He also noted a recent court decision regarding the Tiki Hut that specifically establishes maximum decibel levels, days/hours of operation, etc. for them.

Ms. Jillian Lusk, Director Oconee County Chamber of Commerce, addressed Council requesting that objective standards be established.

Mr. Jim Bennett, Tiki Hut Manager, addressed Council noting that his establishment is working to be a good neighbor and working within the most recent court ruling.

County Discussion Regarding Noise Regulations in Oconee County

Mr. McCall opened discussions between Council members with various opinions offered to include:

- Review of existing ordinance [copy filed with these minutes]
- Establishment of specific time / decibel criteria
- Council's desire to foster Economic Development and local tourism
- Potential sound suppression options
- House of workshop vs. Sponsored Community event options
- Various business operation noises, hunting noises, boating noises, etc.

Mr. McCall called on Mr. Chad Rawlings, Superior Sound Owner, who addressed Council regarding technical aspects of decibel readings, distances, sound travel, etc. Staff provided Council with copies of ordinances and decibel information that Mr. Rawlings presented to the Planning Commission earlier this year [copies filed with these minutes].

Mr. McCall called on Sheriff Mike Crenshaw who addressed issues related to enforcement of the existing ordinance. Sheriff Crenshaw had a decibel meter with him at the meeting and allowed Mr. Rawlings to provide a short example of how the machine operates; taking readings of the council chambers air handler.

Additionally, Sheriff Crenshaw requested that any revision to the ordinance include objective vs. subjective measurements. He offered to conduct random readings around the county at various locations and report back to Council at their October 20, 2015 regular meeting his findings. Council concurred and requested the Clerk place this report on the agenda for that meeting.

Mr. Martin addressed Council noting that Council needs to specifically review the exception section of the existing ordinance; determine specific objective measurements, and day/time allowable noise level establishment, etc.

Lastly, Mr. Rawlings cautioned Council to establish objective criteria not based on public preferences but based on safe limits established for the health and safety of the citizens in the county.

Public Comment Regarding Noise Regulations in Oconee County

Mr. McCall allowed for additional Public Comment on this matter throughout the Council Discussion portion of the meeting.

Mr. Ben Turetzky, FOLKS Executive Director, addressed Council noting the complexity of the issue citing several examples of occasional noises to include hunting, Duke drills, etc.

Mr. Bill Gilster addressed Council requesting careful review and the establishment of objective standards.

Mr. Gary Littlefield addressed Council again noting that he did his due diligence prior to buying his home near the Tiki Hut and reviewed the noise ordinance. He was informed after moving in that the ordinance was not being enforced.

Ms. Ann Mauldin addressed Council voicing concerns with the Tiki Hut and their compliance with the times established in the existing ordinance.

Mr. Ryan Honea, Planning Commission member, addressed Council requesting Council not restrict farming or hunting activities as they are currently allowed under the existing ordinance.

Mr. Frankie Pearson addressed Council in support for outdoor concerts.

Mr. Bennett addressed Council again stating that the Tiki Hut has live music only on Friday & Saturdays and on Sunday has acoustic music.

Mr. Greg Oraham addressed Council again in support for a house of worship exemption.

Adjourn

Mr. McCall thanked all those who spoke and Mr. Rawlings and Sheriff Crenshaw for their valuable input.

Mr. Dexter made a motion, approved unanimously 5 – 0, to adjourn at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council